



BATMAN:
DARK PATTERNS

13+
TEEN 11

BATMAN

DARK PATTERNS



WATTERS
SHERMAN
FARRELL

THE CHILD OF FIRE PART TWO

This school has secrets. So does she.

GOTHAM ACADEMY

FIRST YEAR



Writers
BRENDEN FLETCHER,
KARL KERSCHL,
and **BECKY CLOONAN**
return to the fan-favorite series

Art by
MARCO FERRARI
Covers by **KARL KERSCHL**



6 issues
Go back to school this
OCTOBER



I HATE THIS.

YOU GOTTA HOPE THE COMMISSIONER KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING, BUT...



...I HATE THIS.

DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

GOD, HOW I'VE MISSED THAT SMELL.

THERE WERE PEOPLE IN THE FIRE, WEREN'T THERE? AT LEAST TWO OF THEM.

YOU CAN STILL SMELL THE CRACKLINGS.

LYNNS.
ENOUGH.



FIRE CAN BE SO MANY THINGS. HE SET TWO LAST NIGHT, IF I'VE HEARD CORRECTLY?

BUT YOU CAN DISCOUNT THE SECOND. THE ONE AT THE PATHOLOGY LAB. IT WASN'T IMPORTANT.

WASN'T IMPORTANT? I ALMOST DIED!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHERE WE ARE? THIS IS THE OLDEST CORNER OF GOTHAM.

YES. IT WAS ONLY *INTENDED* TO KILL YOU. FIRE USED AS A TOOL. THIS WAS SO MUCH MORE.

THIS IS WHERE THE *FIRST* FIRE OF GOTHAM RAGED. THAT FLATTENED THE FOREST AND ALLOWED THE CITY TO GROW IN ITS STEAD.

LIGHTING A NEW ONE HERE...THAT'S *RITUAL*.

YOUR CHILD OF FIRE SEEKS TO BUILD SOMETHING. OR DESTROY IT.

THE BAT-MAN MUST HAVE FIGURED THAT OUT, IF HE'S STILL FLUTTERING AROUND.

I DO WONDER WHY YOU'RE ASKING *ME*, RATHER THAN *HIM*?

DC COMICS PRESENTS BATMAN: DARK PATTERNS

THE CHILD OF FIRE

PART 2

MASTER
WAYNE, YOU ARE
NOT WELL.

DAN

WATTERS
Writer

HAYDEN

SHERMAN
Artist

TRÍONA

FARRELL
Colorist

FRANK

CVETKOVIC
Letterer

ARIANNA

TURTURRO
Editor

ROB

LEVIN
Group Editor

HAYDEN SHERMAN

Cover Artist

MARTIN SIMMONDS

Variant Cover Artist

Batman created by

BOB KANE with BILL FINGER

IT'S DR. SEREIKA, ALFRED.

THE CASES HE HAD A HAND IN...PRETENDED TO ASSIST ME AND GORDON.

HE MUST HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE FIRES SOMEHOW.

YOU NEED REST, FOOD, AND PROBABLY A COPIOUS VOLUME OF DRUGS.

THE FIRE AT SCARFACE TOWERS. THE FIRE IN THE ROOKERY.

THEIR LOCATIONS CORRESPOND TO THOSE OF HISTORIC FIRES. BLAZES THAT LED TO SOCIAL OR STRUCTURAL REFORM.

MASTER WAYNE...

HE'S REPLICATING FIRES THAT SCULPTED THE CITY.

MASTER WAYNE.

IF I CAN TREAT GOTHAM AS A BODY...PAY ATTENTION TO ITS WOUND PATTERNS AND SCARS, I CAN--

BRUCE!

I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO LOSE YOU.

I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO WAKE UP.

I'M ALMOST THROUGH WITH THIS, ALFRED. I'VE ALMOST SOLVED IT.

BULLY FOR YOU.

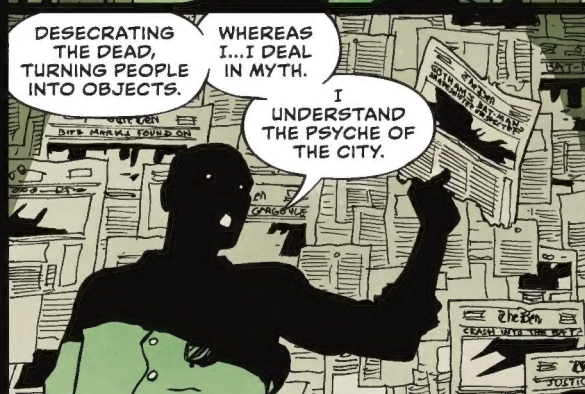
YOU WERE SHOT IN THE *BACK*. THE WOUND IS *INFECTED*.

YOUR BODY IS STILL FIGHTING IT.

I AM NOT TELLING YOU TO STOP TREATING THIS GODFORSAKEN CITY. I GAVE UP ON THAT LONG AGO.

BUT I *AM* TELLING YOU THAT IF YOU DO NOT TREAT *YOUR* BODY, BRUCE WAYNE WILL *DIE*!

AND THEN HOW WILL YOU GO CHASING DOWN THIS DR. SEREIKA?





YOU'RE A...
JOURNALIST?
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

WELL,
IT'S LIKE
THIS.

YOU AND I,
BEING TWO SIDES
OF THE SAME COIN,
I THINK WE'VE REALLY
WANTED THE SAME
THING.

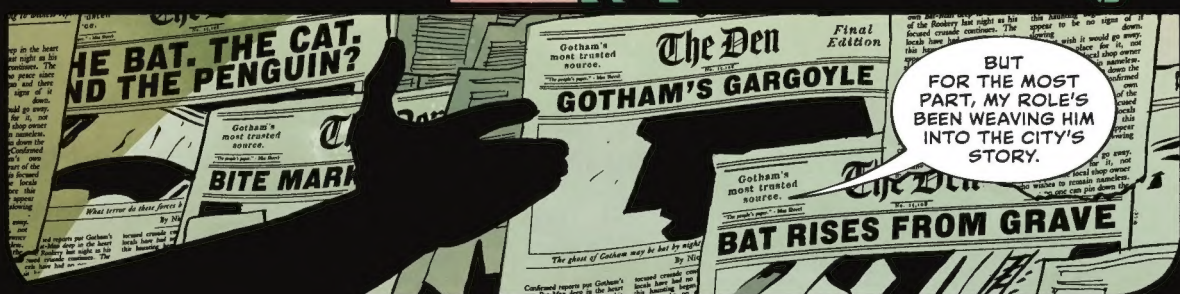


WE'VE
BOTH SEEN THE
HORRENDOUS PIT
GOTHAM HAS BECOME,
AND SOUGHT TO
SAVE IT IN OUR
OWN WAY.

AND
THAT'S LED US
BOTH TO THE
BAT-MAN.



I'VE BEEN
DOING MY BEST, I
REALLY HAVE. STEERING
HIM HERE AND THERE...
ASSISTING WITH TIDBITS
OF KNOWLEDGE
WHERE I CAN.



BUT
FOR THE MOST
PART, MY ROLE'S
BEEN WEAVING HIM
INTO THE CITY'S
STORY.



HE'S AN
IDEA.

ONE THAT
FITS SEAMLESSLY
INTO THE RECESSES
OF THE CITY'S
MIND.

HE COULD
HAVE TURNED
THINGS AROUND,
I THINK. JUST
THE CONCEPT
OF HIM.

BUT
YOU'VE BEEN
TEARING IT
ALL DOWN.

I'VE ONLY
ASSISTED
HIM ON CASES.
DETECTIVE
WORK.

GOTHAM
DREAMED HIM UP
BECAUSE IT NEEDED
HIM, AND *YOU* TORE
HIM DOWN TO EARTH.
TURNING HIM INTO
NOTHING BUT
A...

...BUT
A DAMNED
POLICEMAN!

FLESH AND
BONE, SITTING
AROUND IN A LAB,
SWEATING THROUGH
SPANDEX AND
STARING THROUGH
MICROSCOPES.

IF THE
CITY COMES TO
SEE HIM THIS WAY,
IT WILL HAVE BEEN
FOR NOTHING.

I
DON'T BLAME
YOU, YOU KNOW.
BUT WE CAN'T
COEXIST.

ONE OF
US HAS TO
EAT THE
OTHER.



SAY
AH.

I'M
NOT A CHILD,
ALFRED.



NO. YOU'RE A
VERY BIG, SCARY
BATMAN, MASTER
BRUCE.

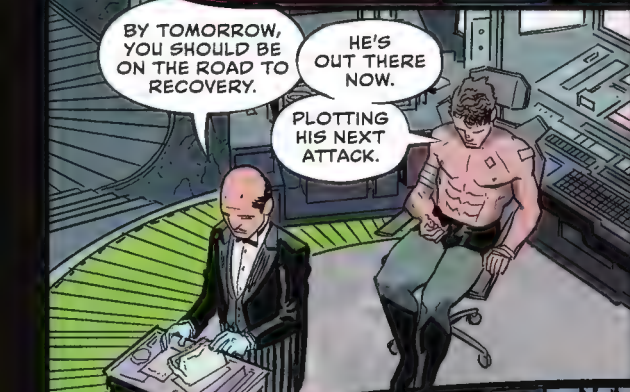


AH.



TAKE
THIS. IT'LL
HELP YOU
SLEEP.

THE GOOD
NEWS IS YOUR
FEVER IS
CRESTING.



BY TOMORROW,
YOU SHOULD BE
ON THE ROAD TO
RECOVERY.

HE'S
OUT THERE
NOW.

PLOTTING
HIS NEXT
ATTACK.



HE'S OUT THERE WITH THE ENTIRE
GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT
LOOKING FOR HIM, AND THE FIRE
DEPARTMENT ON STANDBY.

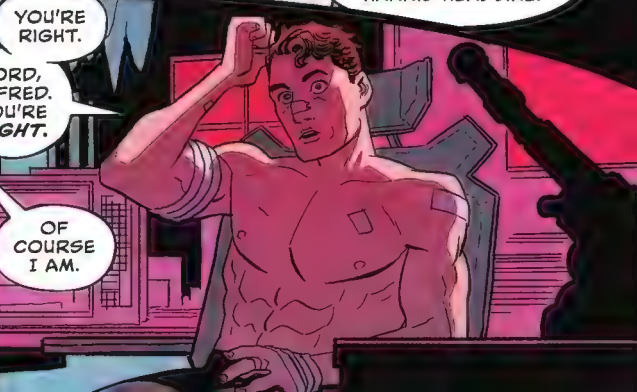
I THINK WE'LL
BE READING THE
GOTHAM POST'S
ACCOUNT OF HIS
ARREST IN THE
MORNING.

HONESTLY,
THIS WHOLE "CHILD
OF FIRE" THING ALREADY
SOUNDS LIKE A NICKY
HARRIS HEADLINE.

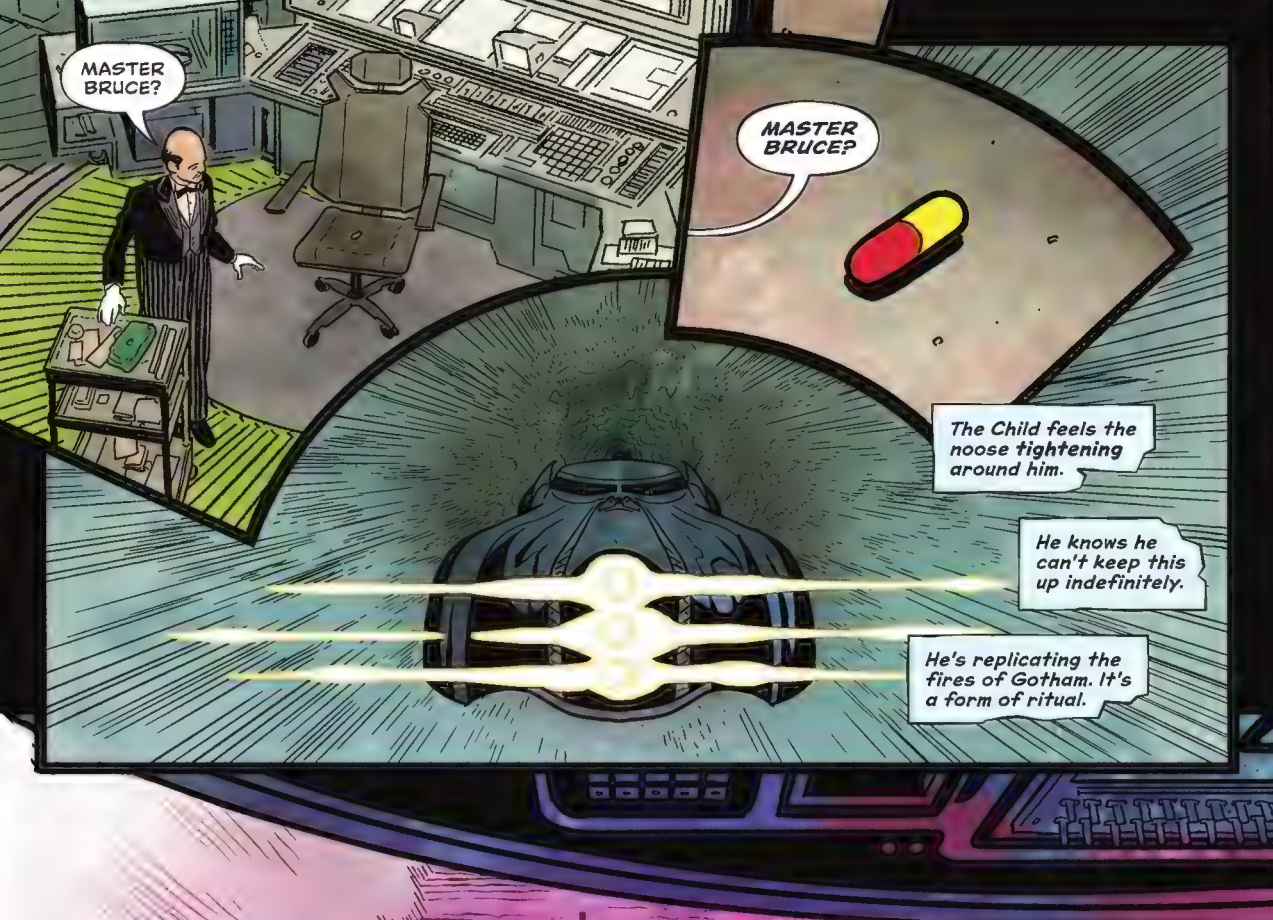


YOU'RE
RIGHT.

LORD,
ALFRED.
YOU'RE
RIGHT.



OF
COURSE
I AM.



MASTER
BRUCE?

MASTER
BRUCE?

*The Child feels the
noose tightening
around him.*

*He knows he
can't keep this
up indefinitely.*

*He's replicating the
fires of Gotham. It's
a form of ritual.*



*So he'll skip to
the big one.*

*The one that changed
the entire face of the
city.*



The Great Fire
of Gotham.



One morning in December 1835,
the people of Gotham were woken
by the light of dawn to find it
was not dawn at all.

It was three a.m.
and the city was ablaze.

It had been an
era of grand
expansion.

The population had
swelled by a factor
of ten over the
previous century.

With the onset of the
Industrial Revolution,
it had almost doubled
in the prior decade.

The people of Gotham
lived on top of each
other, folded together
in one of the densest
populations on Earth.

GORDON.
DO YOU
COPY?



The city's infrastructure had not kept up with this expansion.

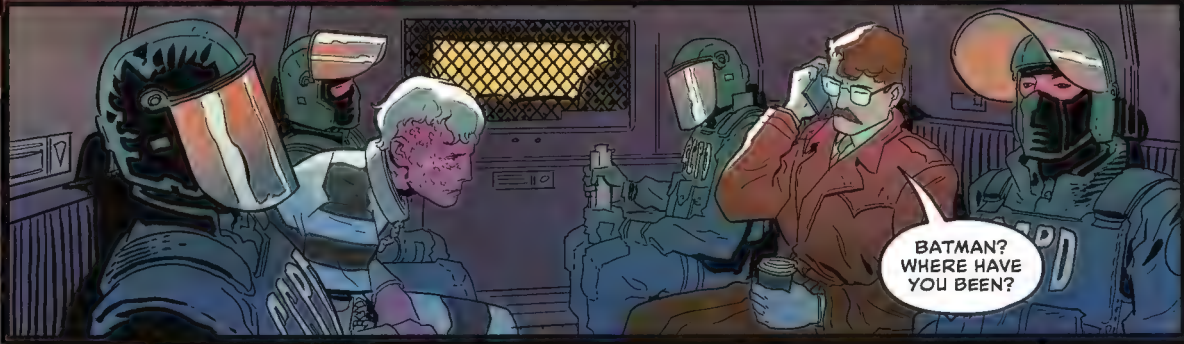
And despite the population boom, the Gotham Fire Department had barely grown.

Water was often a problem. Indoor plumbing would not become commonplace until the early 1900s.

Wells were still utilized, a scattering of access points throughout the neighborhoods.

Less than three hundred new firefighters was deemed adequate.

The city didn't wish to spend any more money.



BATMAN?
WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN?

At first, people woke each other to watch the flames.

Fire was a source of terror, but also a spectacle.

Almost incomprehensible in its ability to inspire awe.

But as the hours wore on and the flames spread, they woke each other to flee.

The summer had been dry.

Most of the city was still made of wood.

The winds were howling.

IT'S THE GREAT FIRE OF GOTHAM, GORDON.

WHAT?
AS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY?





The fire accelerated rather than slowed as it reached the river.

Every inch of real estate near the docks was utilized for commerce. A neighborhood stuffed with goods for trade.

Linens. Bitumen. Oils. All fuel for the flames.

As the blaze refused to die down, a detachment of U.S. Marines attempted to create a firebreak, removing buildings in the fire's path with demolition charges.

BATMAN?

DAMMIT.



Literacy levels were still low in 1835. Your average citizen did not navigate the city by street name, but by landmark.

They knew the city visually...and before their eyes, it vanished.

Everything they knew of Gotham. Their entire way of understanding the city, swallowed by smoke and flame.

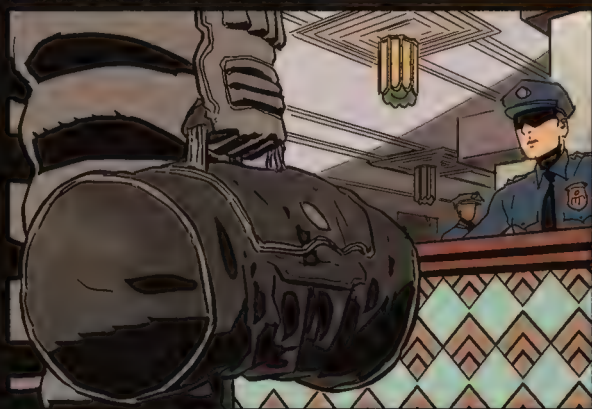
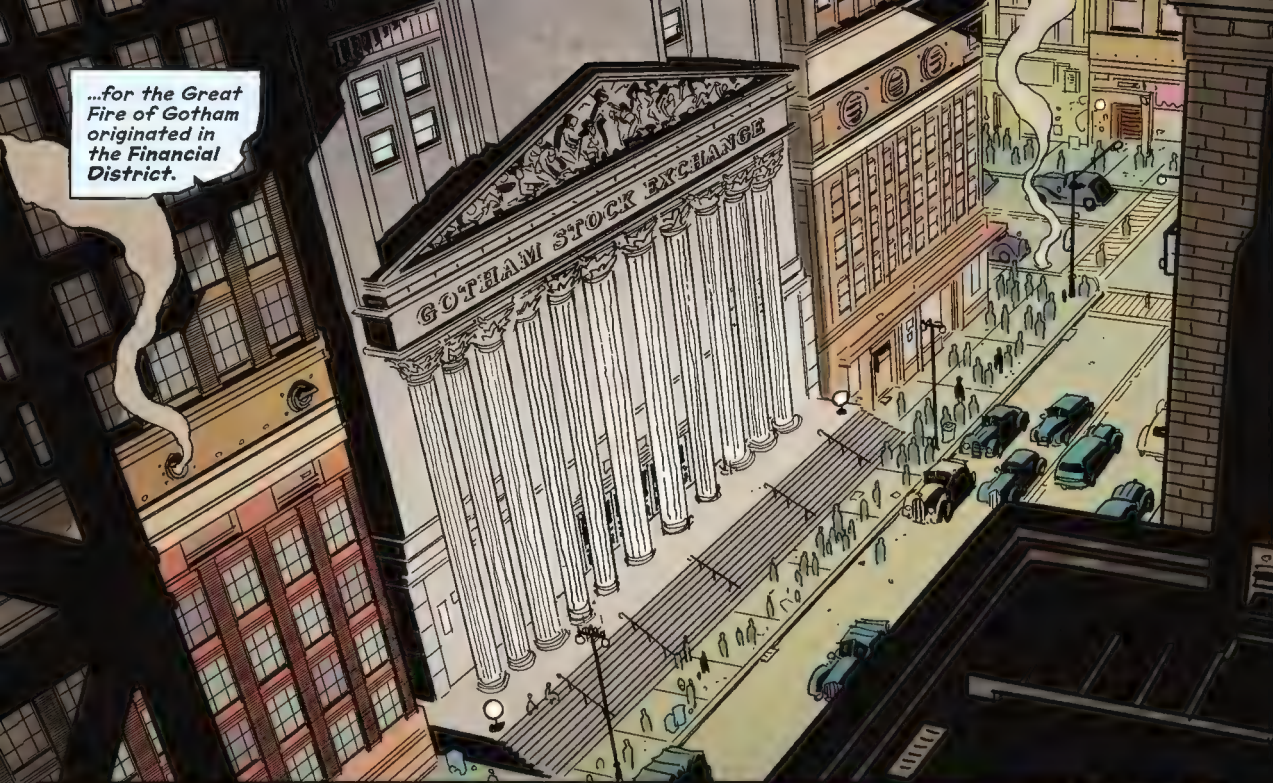
When it was rebuilt, it would have seemed to them a different place entirely.

All except for the place where the fire originated.

That was rebuilt fastidiously.

An act of defiance against the ruinous might of nature. A show of power...

...for the Great
Fire of Gotham
originated in
the Financial
District.



CAN I
HELP YOU,
SIR?



NO
THANK
YOU.



SIR,
WHAT'S
IN THE
BAG?

A SIMPLE
HOMEMADE
INCENDIARY
DEVICE.

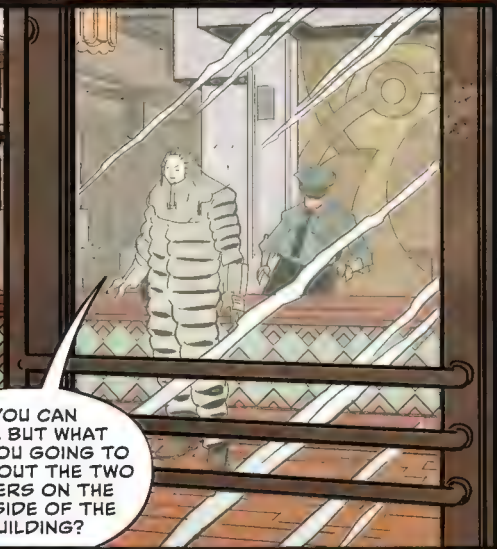


MY GOD!

IT'S FUNNY
WHEN YOU THINK
ABOUT IT, HOW
EASY FIRE IS FOR
ANY OF US TO
ACCESS.

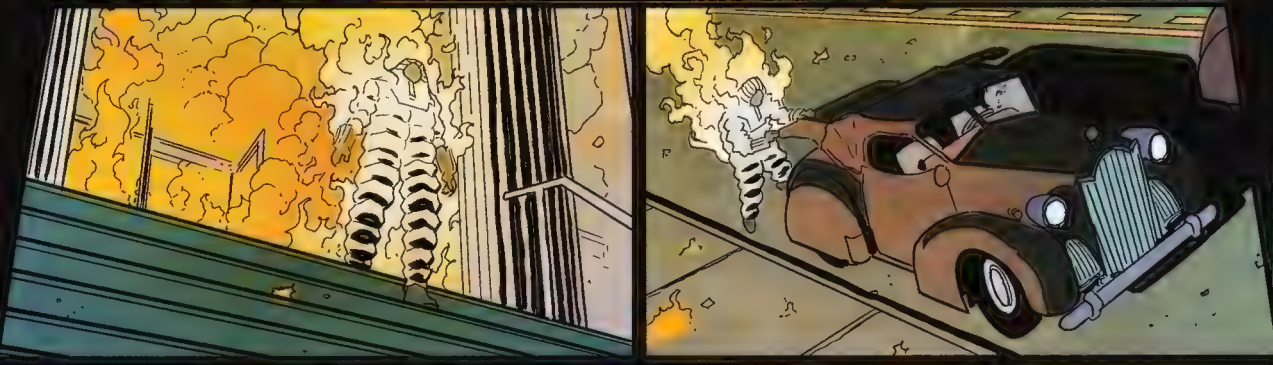


GET
IT OUT OF
HERE!



YOU CAN
TRY, BUT WHAT
ARE YOU GOING TO
DO ABOUT THE TWO
OTHERS ON THE
OUTSIDE OF THE
BUILDING?







ALL RIGHT,
SEREIKA.

I'VE ALWAYS
PRIDED MYSELF
ON BEING A
FAIR MAN.

SO WE'RE
GOING TO LET
THE **FIRE** DECIDE.
IN WHOSE IMAGE
IS THE CITY TO
CONTINUE...

...THE CHILD OF
FIRE, TO LEAD
US INTO THE
FUTURE?

OR
THE OLD
CORPSE OF
GOTHAM?



TO BE CONCLUDED...

"Masterfully blends high-octane action with emotional depth."—AIPT

BLACK CANARY™

BEST OF THE BEST

**BLACK CANARY VS.
LADY SHIVA!**
SIX ROUNDS.
ONE CHAMPION.

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Written by
TOM KING

Art by
RYAN SOOK

HARDCOVER
COLLECTED EDITION
AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER





**DON'T MISS A SINGLE ROUND OF
DC'S KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT,
FIGHT OF THE CENTURY!**

OCTOBER:

- **JUSTICE LEAGUE: THE OMEGA ACT**
- **DC K.O. #1**
- **TITANS #28**
- **SUPERMAN #31**
- **THE FLASH #26**
- **JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED #12**

NOVEMBER:

- **DC K.O. KNIGHTFIGHT #1**
- **AQUAMAN #11**
- **TITANS #29**
- **DC K.O. #2**
- **SUPERMAN #32**
- **THE FLASH #27**
- **JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED #13**

**DC K.O. EXPLODES IN DECEMBER WITH
ALL-FIGHT MONTH, AND THE BATTLE
CONTINUES THROUGH MARCH 2026!**

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The Last Kryptonian-DCP

